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Academy Chief Sees 'Chaos' in Nixon Budget

The Nixon Administration's budget cuts may drive academic biomedical research into "chaos," may "cripple" the space science program, may hamper research in other disciplines, and may cause a "huge problem" for the National Science Foundation.

That's the opinion of Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, the nation's most prestigious scientific body and self-appointed guardian of the well-being of the scientific enterprise.

Handler had been relatively quiet amidst the wailing that arose from the scientific community in reaction to the Administration's proposed budget for fiscal 1974 and its apparent downgrading of basic research—a circumstance which caused considerable grumbling among Academicians who felt he should take up the cudgels more vigorously in defense of science. But he has gradually begun speaking out; last month he jumped into the fray with gusto by making major public attacks on Administration policies which he believes "seriously jeopardize the scientific endeavor."

In testimony before the Senate Special Subcommittee on the National Science Foundation on May 3, and in a speech to the American Society for Microbiology on May 9, Handler surveyed a broad range of federal actions affecting science and found ample cause for alarm.

He directed most of his fire at budgetary trends, including a "uniquely critical situation" at the National Institutes of Health which could cause "calamitous" problems at the nation's

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Drug Researcher Charged With False Reports

For what the FDA describes as only the second time in its enforcement history, a clinical investigator has been criminally charged with "falsifying scientific reports submitted to the Food and Drug Administration in support of new drug applications."

The offenses, alleged to have taken place in 1967 and 1968, are stated in indictments that a Louisiana grand jury returned May 3 against Dr. Wallace Rubin, a private practitioner who is also an associate professor of medicine at Tulane University. At an arraignment the following day, Rubin pleaded not guilty to two counts of mail fraud and three counts of submitting false information to the government. The charges are felonies and each count carries a penalty of five years' imprisonment and a $10,000 fine.

According to an FDA announcement, Rubin submitted "false reports" to Charles Pfizer and Co., in connection with the drug Benzquinamide, and to Dupont in connection with Metopimazine. Neither drug has been approved by the FDA.

FDA legal sources say that the only previous case of this type occurred in 1963, but that they now plan to increase their enforcement effort in this area.

In Brief

Bad legislative breaks continue to thwart efforts to obtain a startup appropriation for the newly created congressional Office of Technology Assessment. One quest for money is tied to a Legislative Appropriations Bill which is bogged in a House-Senate dispute over funds for extending the West front of the Capitol; another is contained in a second supplemental bill which is a good candidate for a veto, since it contains a prohibition against bombing Cambodia.

A US District Court in Washington ruled May 11 that seven women's organizations and 10 individual women have a legal right to sue the government and NIH for allegedly discriminating against the appointment of women to NIH advisory committees.

Former NBS Director Lewis Branscomb, now vice president and chief scientist of IBM, has lately been speaking out strongly against federal science policies: "The government has a responsibility to provide the scientific and technical environment of the country," he told a Stanford symposium May 14, "All of us are disheartened to see what's happened in the last year—not so much in the dollars as in the attitudes and the reversal of previous policy directions."

Thirteen major engineering and scientific societies have announced endorsement of "Guidelines to Professional Employment of Engineers and Scientists," specifying working and severance conditions. But the American Chemical Society, now headed by insurgent candidate Alan Nixon, has declined to join on the grounds that the Guidelines are insufficiently weighted toward employee interests.

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medical schools and universities.

Handler noted that the total funds for fundamental research proposed in the President's budget for fiscal 1974 are below those available in fiscal 1967, when stated in constant dollars. "If at any time there was 'fat in the system,'" he said, "it has long since been wrung out."

Handler attributed the decline in basic science spending primarily to four factors: a decision by the President, and now possibly Congress, to hold down total federal expenditures; a trend to trim back basic research spending at the so-called mission agencies in recent years; increasing emphasis by the government on research "which promises the earliest payoffs;" and the Administration's "deeply held philosophy" that the government has no responsibility to contribute to the personal support of graduate students or postdoctoral fellows.

He expressed particular concern over the fact that mission agencies, faced with tighter budget ceilings, have been cutting back their research support—a trend which he said has occurred at DoD, NASA, AEC, NOAA, NIH, and even, in a sense, NSF. What then happens, he said, is that each laboratory which loses its funding from any other agency approaches NSF for support, and while arrangements have been made in past years to increase the NSF budget to accomodate these "dropouts," the additional funding has "almost invariably been less than that which was lost in the other agency."

Handler predicted that "the next large wave of dropouts" to descend on NSF will come from NIH, where the fiscal 1974 budget calls for sharp cuts in new competitive research grants, general research support grants, fellowships and traineeships. He was unable to predict how many investigators will be squeezed out of NIH, but said that, in view of the new emphasis on directed research, as exemplified by the "wars" on cancer and cardiovascular disease, it will almost certainly be those who are "engaged in the most fundamental research of unknown application." This is particularly likely, he said, because the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, which is the prime source of support for basic biomedical research at NIH, is slated to have its budget drop from $28.3 million in 1972 to only $5.1 million in 1974.

Nor are the problems limited to the biomedical sciences, he added. Nuclear structure physics is "in serious danger with leadership now passing to other nations," partly because, while NSF has increased its support of this field modestly, both the Navy and the AEC have reduced theirs. Astronomy is hampered by a "failure to acquire new instrumentation" and "lack of operating funds for current facilities." The future of space science seems "dim" because, within a level NASA budget, "the

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NSF Seen Threatened By Political Linkage

The Nixon Administration's reorganization of the science advisory apparatus may drag the National Science Foundation into politics and may handcuff NSF Director H. Guyford Stever so that he is unable to advocate the interests of his agency.

That gloomy assessment comes from Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, who has been keeping close tabs on developments at NSF as a member of the National Science Board, the top policy-making body for the Foundation.

In a speech to the American Society for Microbiology on May 9, Handler noted that the Administration has abolished the post of president's science adviser, the White House Office of Science and Technology, and the President's Science Advisory Committee and has transferred many of the responsibilities of these groups to Stever as director of NSF.

Handler acknowledged that "it is not yet clear how much of their authority and 'clout'" Stever has inherited, but he suggested that "considerable" difficulties will confront Stever when he officially becomes science adviser to the government at large on July 1.

These difficulties include lack of staff support; conflict of interest when, as science adviser, he must offer advice that affects his own agency; uncertainty as to whether he will have "the force of the White House" when dealing with other agencies; and lack of direct access to the President.

Handler was particularly concerned that the new linkage between the NSF director and the White House might have two adverse effects.

One is that NSF, which "has come to be regarded as an agency of high professional competence" over the course of two decades, may now come to be viewed "in a more political light." This may occur, he suggested, if outsiders think of the NSF staff as the staff of the "science adviser," and if they think its decisions are influenced by "more detailed directives flowing from a management-oriented White House staff rather than being governed entirely by scientific considerations."

The second possible adverse effect is "the likelihood that, as an honest man, Guy Stever may, all unconsciously, develop a tendency to lean over backwards so as not to appear excessively to advocate the programs and financial requirements of his own agency—when that agency requires the strongest advocacy in these times."

Kennedy Promises Legislation to Ease NIH 'Crisis'

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Health Subcommittee, has pledged to ride to the rescue of the beleaguered inhabitants of NIH.

Kennedy told a cheering, overflow audience at NIH on May 23 that he would do "everything in my power" to reverse the "short-sighted health policies" of the Nixon administration.

"I believe that this agency today faces the gravest crisis of its distinguished history, a crisis that threatens to shake the foundations of our biomedical research policy and alter the nature of that policy itself," Kennedy said.

"... It is a crisis which developed because a small group of men, isolated both from the scientific community and the people they are supposed to serve, decided that they alone knew best about what was important for the health of this country. They rejected the advice of outside consultants, leading scientists, and their own great research agency. If we have learned anything from the tragic events of the Watergate scandal, it is that public policy must not be made in that arrogant fashion."

Kennedy said he would introduce bills that would restore money to the fiscal 1973 NIH budget for training grants and fellowships and would make the training grants and fellowships mandatory, rather than permissive, so as "to be sure that these programs continue" despite Administration plans to phase them out. He also said he would offer an amendment to increase the NIH budget for general research grants to medical centers.

At this point it is not clear whether the legislation is apt to pass both houses of Congress and, if so, whether it will survive veto or impoundment by the Administration. But Kennedy is the most influential senator on health research matters, so his pledge is not to be taken lightly.

In his 20-minute talk, Kennedy said another component of the biomedical crisis is "the Administration's decision to emphasize targeted and applied research at the expense of undifferentiated basic research." Disputing the idea that "basic research has become a luxury to be curtailed in the name of economy," he asserted that Congress, in approving an expanded cancer program, had intended it to be in addition to, not at the expense of, NIH's other research activities.

Finally, Kennedy pledged to defend the peer review system against possible dismantling by the Administration. He made public a hitherto secret OMB document that has caused alarm in the biomedical community (SGR, Vol. III, No. 10). The tone of that document is indeed negative toward the peer review system. It cites several criticisms of peer review, including contentions that peer review erodes the authority of government administrators, gives the scientific community a vehicle for lobbying for more funds, and produces unavoidable conflicts of interest. It also lists a series of "alternatives for improving the peer review system," ranging from complete abolition to transformation of the system so as to rely on readers who would review applications by mail rather than in committee.

Although the OMB document does not quite recommend abolition of the peer review system, Kennedy said "it would not be the first time that major Administration proposals were developed in this manner." He said he will introduce legislation shortly "to expand and perfect" the peer review system at NIH.

Kennedy had been asked to speak at NIH by members of a Vietnam Moratorium Committee, who plan to invite HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger to speak at a future date.

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rising costs of the shuttle will markedly reduce, perhaps cripple, the space science program in a few years." And similar situations are arising in scientific oceanography, as well as in many disciplines which don't require large instruments.

Handler said he hoped these trends could be reversed in the agencies, particularly at NIH, but if they continue, he said, then repair will only be possible by boosting the NSF budget by "a significant fraction" of its current total.

Meanwhile, a more restrained assessment of the situation was provided to SGR by Edward P. Todd, NSF's deputy assistant director for research, who said that, as of a month or so ago, the basic research proposals submitted to NSF were coming in at almost the same rate as last year. He said there was a "slight pickup" in biological proposals over the past two months—possibly because NIH grantees are hedging their bets by submitting backup proposals to NSF—but the pickup is not substantial enough to indicate a trend is underway. If a problem develops, Todd said, then NSF's fiscal 1975 budget, now in the beginning stages of preparation, could presumably be structured to meet the new demand.

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AEC Shakeup Breaks Shaw's Grip on Safety Research

The Atomic Energy Commission has been shaken by a reorganization that appears to enhance the stature of Dixy Lee Ray, the new chairman of the commission, while diminishing the power of Milton Shaw, the controversial head of the AEC's reactor development programs, who has become a *bête noire* to nuclear critics and environmentalists.

The reorganization was announced on May 15 after a bitter internal fight at the AEC and on the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Its most controversial provision creates a new Division of Reactor Safety Research which will take over responsibility for safety research on the present generation of light-water reactors.

Such responsibility had previously been vested in Shaw's Division of Reactor Development and Technology, a seeming conflict of missions which led to charges that Shaw, in his zeal to push reactor development, was ignoring and suppressing evidence that there are serious problems with the emergency core cooling systems and other safety features of light-water reactors.

The new safety division will be headed by Herbert J. C. Kouts, a senior staff member at Brookhaven National Laboratory and a former member of the AEC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. He will report directly to the AEC's general manager.

An AEC press release said separation of the safety and development functions, and the organizational placement of the new safety division within AEC, "will assure independent reactor safety research." But nuclear critics are adopting a skeptical, wait-and-see attitude.

Richard Sandler, nuclear consultant to Ralph Nader, called it "potentially a significant move—but it could be nothing more than a cosmetic public relations job. We don't know what kind of a guy Kouts will be or what financial and political support he'll get from the commission and OMB."

Similarly, Daniel F. Ford, a key figure in the Union of Concerned Scientists, the group which has led the battle against alleged safety hazards in light-water reactors, said that while the new division could be an improvement, it is apt to "suffer from the same pressures Shaw suffered from," with the result that it may downplay safety problems lest they prove embarrassing to the AEC's efforts to promote reactor development.

Responsibility for safety research on the liquid metal fast breeder reactor will remain with Shaw's division, which has been renamed the Division of Reactor Research and Development. The commission apparently reasoned, and most nuclear critics agree, that safety is such an intimate part of the design process that it makes sense to keep the two functions intertwined at these early stages of breeder development.

The reorganization plan was reportedly engineered by Dr. Ray, who pushed it through over the objections of Commissioner James T. Ramey at a May 11 meeting of the commission and then managed to neutralize the Joint Committee, which traditionally dominates AEC affairs. The plan was reportedly opposed vigorously by two powerful members of the Joint Committee, Rep. Chet Holifield (D-Calif.) and Rep. Craig Hosmer (R-Calif.), but a majority of the committee members attending a special closed door meeting concluded that the AEC had discretionary power to implement the reorganization, which Dr. Ray had presented as a *fait accompli.*

The episode has been interpreted as evidence that Dr. Ray, who is often pictured as an eccentric lady, is moving to take firm control of the AEC; that Shaw's iron grip on reactor development is weakening (there are rumors he may resign or be forced out); and that the AEC may become increasingly independent of the Joint Committee, particularly if Ramey, the committee's "man" on the commission, is not reappointed when his term expires next month.

Other major changes include:

—Appointment of James L. Liverman, currently director of the division of biomedical and environmental research, to the additional new post of assistant general manager for biomedical and environmental research and safety programs.

—Appointment of John M. Teem, currently director of the Division of Physical Research, to the additional new post of assistant general manager for physical research and laboratory coordination. The post of assistant general manager for research, which had been held by long-term AEC hand, Spofford G. English, has been terminated.

—Appointment of John J. Flaherty, currently assistant general manager for energy and development programs, to the new position of "the" assistant general manager, with broad responsibilities for energy development, uranium enrichment, and relations with Congress, industry, and foreign countries on these matters.

Erratum

It was Mahlon B. Hoagland, director of the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, who charged in a recent speech that the National Institutes of Health "is being destroyed" by federal budgetary and health policies. SGR inadvertently attributed the quote to Hudson Hoagland, president emeritus of the Worcester Foundation and Mahlon's father. (Vol. III, No. 10, p. 6).

NBS Finally Unveils R&D Incentives Program

Items from the March 1972 presidential Message on Science and Technology continue to work their way through the federal bureaucracy, with the latest to emerge being the National Bureau of Standards' portion of the Experimental Technology Incentives Program.

ETIP, as it has come to be called, is the pennypincher's approach to federal invigoration of domestic technology, the justification being that since little is known about the innovative process, small "experiments" should precede big spending.

NBS's governmental partner in this enterprise, the National Science Foundation, was earlier allocated some $15 million for its Experimental R&D Incentives Program, mainly involving collaboration among academic, industrial, and government research centers (SGR Vol. III, No. 8). And now the Office of Management and Budget has cut loose $7 million for NBS to proceed with its part of the program, which will focus on the effects that federal programs and policies have on technological innovation in the private sector. Among the problems to be examined are the relationship between government procurement practices and innovation, the effect of federal health and safety regulations on innovation, and the marketing of innovations produced by individual inventors and small R&D firms.

Additional information is available from: F. Karl Willenbrock, Director, ETIP, National Bureau of Standards, Administration Building, Room A-724, Washington, D.C. 20234.

The question of why 14 months passed between presidential announcement and NBS formulation of the program could lead to an illuminating chapter on the difficulties of getting things done under the auspices of the US government. Nixon requested funds for the program in January 1973, but Congress did not pass an appropriation for the Bureau until late last fall. In December, OMB released $2 million for planning, but in the meantime, the Bureau's parent agency, the Department of Commerce, was running through two secretaries, three assistant secretaries for science and technology, and the directorship of the Bureau itself changed hands. Under such circumstances, it may be that 14 months is a relatively short period.

Rogers Says White House Paralyzes Cancer War

The government's "war" on cancer is bogged down in bureaucratic rigidity, "palace guard" intrigues, and indecision, according to one of its chief architects, Rep. Paul G. Rogers (D-Fla.), chairman of the House subcommittee on health and environment.

Rogers, who spearheaded passage of the National Cancer Act through the House two years ago and is chiefly responsible for keeping the cancer program housed in NIH rather than in a separate agency, delivered a sharp critique of the program in a little-noticed speech at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, N.Y. last month.

He seconded the concerns expressed by leading biomedical scientists that the cancer program must not be allowed to undermine support of basic research or to siphon off funds from the other research programs at NIH. But the chief thrust of his remarks reflected quite a different concern—namely, that the Administration may "waver on its pledge to give cancer a unique position among this nation's priorities."

Rogers said he was disturbed by indications that "a morass of bureaucracy ... is growing rapidly around the cancer program" and that "vital information on the needs of the cancer program is being filtered by certain 'palace guards' [at the White House and Office of Management and Budget] who do not share the sense of urgency" of those who wrote the law. He also warned that the proposed elimination of training grants at NIH "will have a disastrous effect on the very research which is necessary to wage an effective fight against cancer."

As evidence that cancer priorities seemed to have slipped somewhat, he noted that one of the three positions on the President's Cancer Panel has been vacant since February, no deputy director of the National Cancer Institute has been appointed, no head of the division of cancer cure and prevention has been named, and all reports called for by law have been unnecessarily late.

Rogers complained that "indecisive support" from OMB and the White House staff has "paralyzed the decision-making processes in the Cancer Institute for months." It was only because Benno Schmidt, the New York banker who heads the cancer panel, had personal entree to the White House and was thus able to circumvent OMB, that the cancer institute was assured of its $432 million spending level, Rogers said.

The speech represents an initial effort to push the cancer program into higher gear. Rogers will probably increase the pressure once his health subcommittee fights its way clear of a mass of legislation now pending.

Why an Obscure Educator Was Picked to Head NIH

The surprise choice of Robert S. Stone to become the next director of NIH was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to give NIH a broader constituency than just the scientific community.

At this writing, Stone, who is vice president for health sciences and dean of the school of medicine at the University of New Mexico, has not yet been officially nominated by the Nixon Administration, but he has been spending considerable time orienting himself at NIH and word of his pending appointment has leaked out in the press.

The most common reaction to his appointment is blank puzzlement. One source who conducted an informal survey at the recent spring meeting of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences found that 18 of 20 persons questioned had never heard of Stone.

The next most common reaction, at least among partisans of NIH, is that Stone is a poor choice because he is primarily an educator and administrator rather than a scientist; thus, they fear that he is not apt to serve as the forceful scientific advocate which they believe NIH needs in these times of budgetary and administrative conflict between the agency and the Nixon administration.

One well-placed NIH official reports that of 35 comments he received from colleagues, one felt Stone was a good choice, two felt he was a reasonable choice, and the rest hadn't heard of him or felt he was a bad choice. Stone also disturbed some NIH staffers at orientation meetings because of what they considered his "trivial and disappointing" answers to questions about his plans and aspirations.

However, Robert W. Berliner, NIH's deputy director for science, told SGR that "my initial impressions are favorable—he's a very bright fellow and his attitudes about NIH and what NIH ought to be doing are very commendable." That's a significant endorsement in view of the fact that Berliner is considered the prime guardian of scientific research at the institute. Similarly, Robert Marston, the Johnson Administration holdover who was ousted as NIH director in January, told SGR "there's no question that Bob Stone's going to make and keep NIH as good as he can make it."

Stone was among several candidates proposed for the job by a prominent medical figure with close ties to the Nixon Administration, though it is not known if that is the only route by which his name surfaced. That supporter, who asked that his role in the matter be kept confidential, told SGR that Stone has built up the medical school at New Mexico in "very stellar fashion," that he is "able and competent and very highly principled," and that he is a "skilled manager" who will help NIH serve the needs, not just of the scientific community, but of a broader constitutency which includes the President, the Congress, and the public as well. Stone's backer suggested that much of the criticism of Stone stems from "a self-interested bureaucratic view at NIH" which believes that the agency's only constituency is the scientific community.

Stone is a pathologist who got his undergraduate degree at Brooklyn College and his M.D. from the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center. He is 51 years old and a Republican. He has been on a sabbatical from New Mexico in order to study management techniques at the Sloan School of Management at MIT. The big question at NIH is whether he will become a forceful leader in his own right or will simply serve as a manager for policies dictated by the Administration.

Survey Finds No Boom in Industrial R&D Spending

That widely forecast expansion of industrial research just isn't happening, according to a report by the McGraw-Hill Economics Department. Though NSF, on the basis of a survey of 50 of the largest corporations, last year forecast selective but substantial growth (SGR Vol. II, No. 18), the McGraw-Hill study concludes that overall, industrial R&D spending is at a standstill because of inflation; furthermore, the study found, that within industry there's been an R&D shift from developing new products and processes to improving existing ones.

Total industrial R&D spending is up five percent this year, McGraw-Hill reported, but the increase will be washed out by an inflationary rate that can be expected to raise salaries and materials by at least 5.5 percent. Meanwhile, as percentage of sales, R&D is slipping from 2.5 percent in 1972 to 2.4 percent this year, and is expected to decline to 2.3 percent in 1976. In 1976, it was forecast, industry expects only 13 percent of sales to come from new products, as compared with the 18 percent that last year's survey foresaw for 1975.

The reason most often cited for pulling back on research was simply that it's too expensive in terms of the likely return.

NIH Weighs $1.2 Million Psychosurgery Request

NIH is quietly pondering a request for $1.2 million from one of the nation's leading psychosurgeons, Vernon H. Mark, to support a three-year study centered on the use of electrode brain implants in violent epileptics who are deemed otherwise "untreatable."

Having just slithered off the griddle for its alleged involvement with live foetal research, NIH is not particularly keen about the arrival of an invitation to bankroll a venture in psychosurgery. In the past, the subject has stirred strong opposition within the NIH staff and among activist medical groups, some of which have publicly demonstrated against Mark at Boston City Hospital, where he is director of neurological service.

Mark, an apostle of developing methods for identifying persons prone to violence and, in some cases, for modifying behavior through brain surgery, contends that his objectives are in the humane tradition of medicine. His critics, however, contend that he is practicing "Clockwork Orange" medicine, that his techniques are simply an updated version of the discredited lobotomy procedure, and that the application of medicine to the treatment of violence and rage is readily susceptible to political misuse against people who have sound reasons for expressing violence and rage.

At the heart of Mark's 85-page grant application is the "question as to whether or not the symptom of ictal, or more frequently, interictal rage is of localizing significance in temporal lobe epileptic patients. Can this symptom be used to pinpoint the area of pathology . . .? Finally, will a radiofrequency lesion in this area decrease the symptoms of rage as well as the frequency of epileptic seizures?"

Mark's application was routed by NIH's division of research grants to the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke (NINDS), thus avoiding the National Institute of Mental Health, which in the past has not looked with favor on support of psychosurgery.

Confronted with the application, NINDS took the rare step of setting up a special, one-shot study section of eight members for peer review, with Bernard C. Holland, of the Emory University department of psychiatry, serving as chairman. The group met May 16 in Boston with Mark, and its evaluation of his proposal will be considered by the NINDS Council at its regular meeting during the last week in June.

Jurist Invited, Un-Invited To Psychosurgery Panel

The assembling of the special NIH study section to review Vernon Mark's application for $1.2 million for a project involving psychosurgery was accompanied by an invitation and then sudden dis-invitation for one of the nation's most distinguished jurists to take part in the proceedings.

When the application arrived at NIH, it was routinely sent to the Division of Research Grants (DRG), where it was decided that the proposal fell within the research interests of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. Dr. Louise Thomsen of the DRG staff was then directed to set up a special peer review panel on the grounds that existing panels did not possess the various professional capabilities necessary for review. Dr. Thomsen invited Bernard C. Holland, of Emory University, to become chairman; he accepted, and responded to her request for suggesting other candidates by offering several names, among them David L. Bazelon, chief judge for the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Bazelon, who has pioneered in linking modern psychiatry and criminal law, accepted, and made arrangements to attend the peer review meeting, which was scheduled to be held about one month later. A few days before the panel met, Bazelon was informed that the invitation was being withdrawn.

SGR has learned that the withdrawal was at the direction of Dr. Thomsen's superior, S. Stephen Schiaffino, the DRG's associate director for scientific review, who told SGR that the "peer review is only for scientific and technical evaluation. We'll get into the ethical and social aspects later."

Bazelon refuses to discuss the matter publicly, but close associates of the judge say he is seething.

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New Defense Research Chief is Puzzling Choice

A long and often-disappointed search for a successor for John S. Foster, Jr., director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E), has concluded with the choice of a little-known West Coast electronics engineer whose selection is something of a puzzlement in both military and science and government circles.

The appointee-designate is Malcolm R. Currie, vice president for research and development for Beckman Instruments, Inc., since 1969, prior to which he spent 14 years with Hughes Aircraft, holding various posts, including vice president and manager of the research and development division.

Though well regarded in professional circles—he is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and holds nine patents—Currie has had little or nothing to do with weapons-related research since joining Beckman, and turns out to be virtually unknown in the so-called weapons fraternity, as well as among organizations that keep an eye on Defense Department affairs.

The most plausible explanation for his selection is that administration headhunters tried long and hard to find a successor for Foster, who, having come to the job in 1965, is probably the highest ranking holdover from Lyndon Johnson's days. When turndown after turndown greeted their approaches, they finally settled upon Currie. Among those given prior consideration, SGR has learned, were B. O. Evans, of IBM; Robert Sproull, University of Rochester; Charles Slichter, University of Illinois, and Albert Wheelon, of Hughes. Currie's name is reported to have been "pretty far down" a list of at least 10.

For whatever it may mean, Currie's selection represents a sharp break with the tradition of filling the top DoD research job from the directorship of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Livermore, home and workshop of the H-bomb and other nuclear devices. When DDR&E was established in 1958, Herbert York left the Livermore directorship to become its chief; he was succeeded at both Livermore and DDR&E by Harold Brown, and Brown, in turn, was succeeded in both posts by Foster.

Within the arms-control "fraternity," a generally held view of the matter is that Currie cannot be anything but an improvement over Foster, who is regarded as having joined up with DoD's technological "hawks." His repeated warnings that the Soviets are racing ahead in weaponry have been particularly galling to the original architects of DDR&E, mainly the liberal-academic crowd that formerly inhabited the White House Office of Science and Technology. In creating DDR&E, they assumed they were creating an in-house counterweight to the military penchant for responding to every conceivable weapons possibility that might occur to the Soviets. Under Foster, they contend, the Soviet-American cycle of action and reaction in weapons research and procurement has been accelerated, with little attention on this side to taking risks aimed at dampening the arms race.

Though Currie has been spending the past few weeks understudying Foster at the Pentagon, his selection is yet to achieve any official standing. He's the man, quite clearly, but DoD has not made an announcement, nor has the White House, and the Senate Armed Services Committee, which must confirm the appointment, has had no formal notice of his nomination.

The explanation is that, like many other matters, his appointment is bogged down in a White House that is heavily preoccupied these days.

Foster, who has been going, going, going for a long time, but is not yet gone, has not announced his plans, but apparently he's now really going. His Defense colleagues are planning a big goodbye party for him June 7.

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